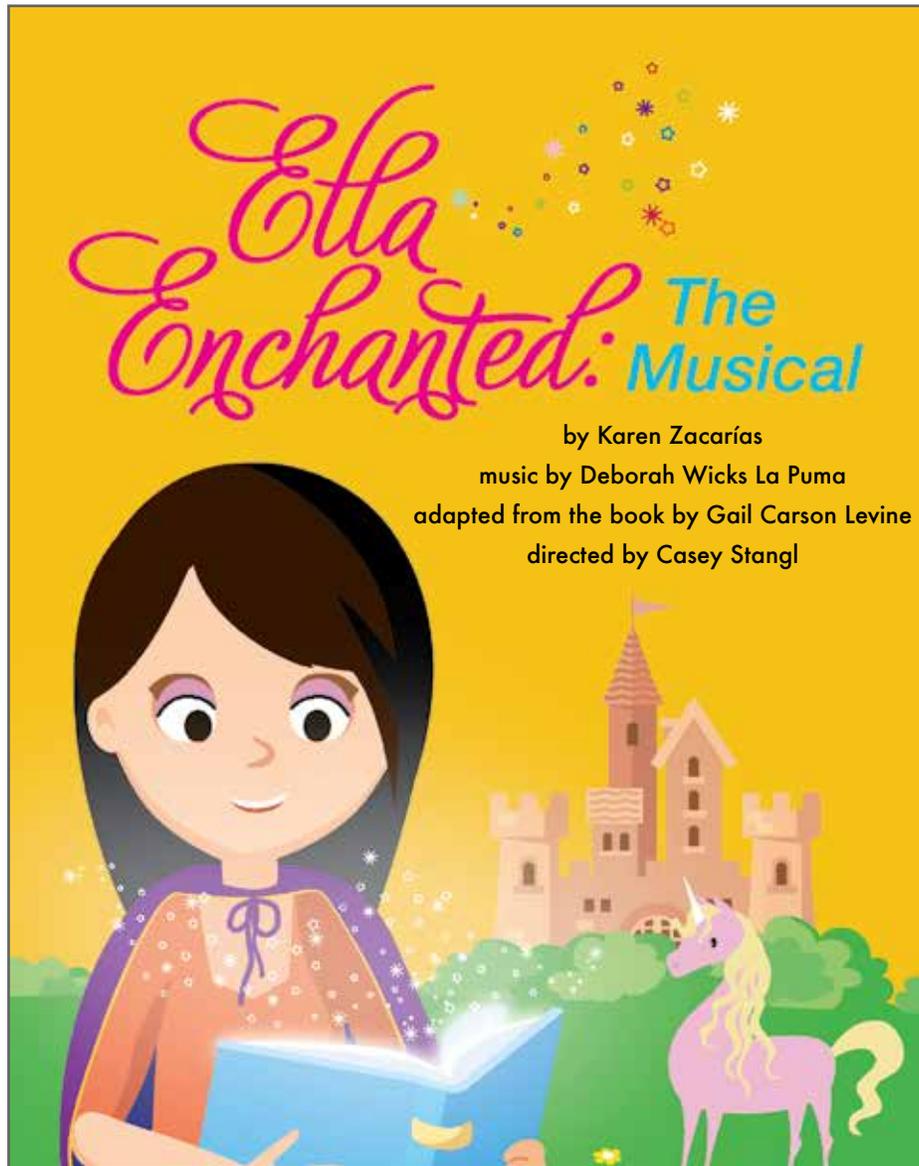


# South Coast Repertory

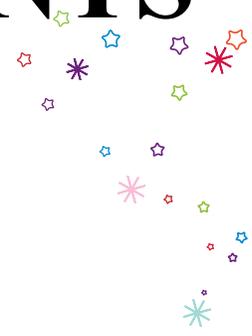
## STUDY GUIDE



Prepared by Naomi Longshore



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# Part I: The Play

## THE CHARACTERS

**Ella**, a girl cursed with the “gift” of obedience

**Prince Charmont**, heir to the throne and  
Ella’s new friend

**Lady Eleanor**, Ella’s mother

**Dame Olga**, Mother of Hattie and Olive,  
later Ella’s stepmother

**Lucinda**, Ella’s fairy godmother, who gave her the “gift”

**Hattie and Olive**, Dame Olga’s spoiled daughters

**Sir Peter**, Ella’s father

**Mistress Manners**, Headmistress of the Finishing  
School

**The Bird**, The mythical creature that teaches Ella  
different languages

**Squire**

**Ogres**

**Giants**

## THE STORY

**E**lla of Frell is a young maiden who has been cursed at birth with the “gift” of obedience by her fairy godmother, Lucinda. Ella’s mother, Lady Eleanor, pleads with the fairy, but Lucinda refuses to reverse the spell. On her tenth birthday, Ella requests that Lady Eleanor begin to teach her how to resist commands. The training helps a little, but the spell is too strong and Ella eventually gives in to the orders. On her fifteenth birthday, Sir Peter, Ella’s father, declares that it is time for Ella to find a wealthy husband. Ella wants to tell her father of her curse, but her mother forbids it and commands that she never tell anyone.

Later, Lady Eleanor falls ill with gnome flu and passes away. At the funeral, Sir Peter gives Ella her mother’s magic book and emerald necklace. At that very moment, Dame Olga and her two daughters, Hattie and Olive, intrude on the funeral to fawn over Sir Peter because they believe he is a rich widower. Prince Charmont of Kyrria arrives at the funeral to convey his condolences. Ella and the prince strike up a friendly conversation and he even requests that she call him by his nickname, Char. The moment is interrupted by Hattie and Olive, who ambush the Prince. Ella and Prince Char escape to the menagerie behind the Frell stables where Ella likes to spend her time. The menagerie is filled with magical beings such as centaurs, dragons, unicorns and Ella’s favorite, the Bird. Ella introduces Prince Char to the Bird, who gives them a lesson on the languages of Elfian, Abdegi, Gnomic and Ogrese. When Ella returns to her home, she discovers that her father is engaged to Dame Olga and is shipping her off to finishing school with her evil daughters.

On the way to finishing school, Hattie and Olive discover Ella’s secret and take advantage of it by commanding her to rub their feet and even give them her mother’s necklace. The sisters decide to keep Ella’s curse to themselves so they can enjoy sabotaging her while at school. One day, Ella receives a surprise letter from Prince Char that lifts her spirits and makes her feel less alone. Ella and Char continue send witty letters back and forth. When Hattie discovers the letters, she orders Ella to destroy their friendship by telling the prince she hates him. Ella is devastated by the order and decides to run away to find Lucinda and convince her to reverse the curse. She uses



her mother's magic book to learn that Lucinda will soon be attending a giants' wedding.

Her journey is delayed when she is discovered by three ogres who plan to make her their dinner. Their melodic song almost lures her in until she remembers that she speaks Ogrese. She cleverly convinces them that they would prefer to eat vegetables and lulls them to sleep. As she is leaving, she runs into Prince Char, who came because he heard about a young maiden under attack by ogres. He is impressed with Ella's abilities and helps her tie up the ogres. The two set off for the Giants' wedding.

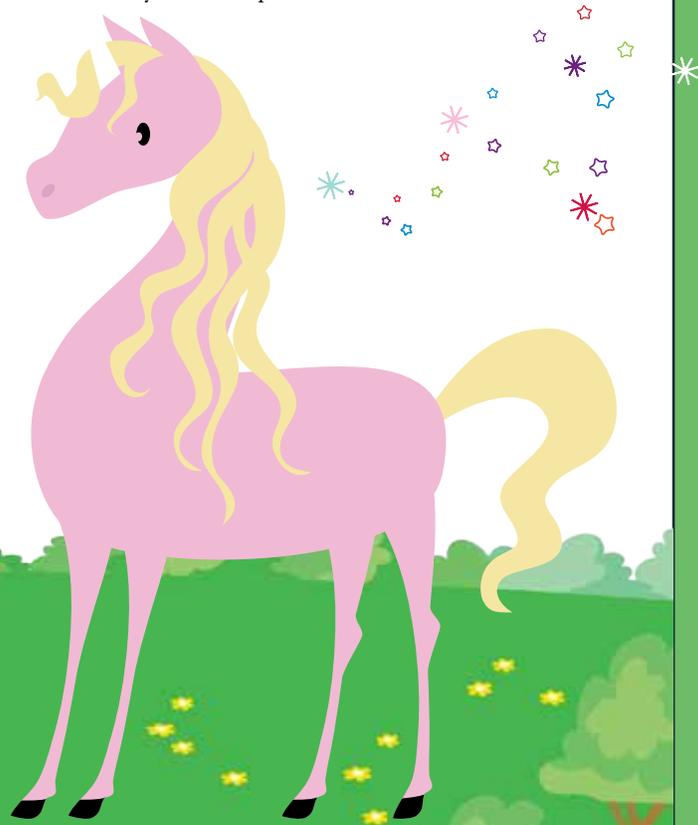
They arrive at the giants' wedding and quickly spot Lucinda. Ella and Char chase her, but she disappears into thin air. Char reveals to Ella that he will be going away to the neighboring country of Ayortha for a year. The two part ways, but not before Ella shares her favorite Ayorthian poem and promises to write him back. Ella finds Lucinda, who refuses to lift her curse—so Ella manages to trick Lucinda into trying her "gifts" on herself. If Lucinda does not adore every second, she will grant Ella any wish she wants. Later, Ella is shocked to find her father attending the wedding. He and Dame Olga were just married. He admits that he married Dame Olga for money rather than love. Just then, Lucinda approaches to bestow a gift to the newly married couple. Unaware of the negative reputation of Lucinda's spells, Sir Peter and Dame Olga agree and are given the gift of "eternal, binding love." This gift only means misery for Ella as she must return home with Dame Olga and live as their servant while her father leaves on another trip.

Back at home, Ella is put to work brushing, sweeping and cleaning. The only bright spot in her days is her correspondence with Prince Char. Their friendship eventually blossoms into love as he offers her a marriage proposal. At first, Ella is overjoyed and believes that his love will save her from her step-family. The idea is quickly crushed when she is unable to resist Hattie's command to hurt Olive. She decides that her love for Char could put him or the kingdom at risk if anyone found out about her curse. She writes a letter to Char to convince him to not love her anymore. She lies and says

that she is married to an older, rich man. Her only hope is that someday Lucinda will break the spell and she can tell him the truth.

Prince Charmont's homecoming ball is about to commence. Hattie and Olive are attending, hoping to lock in the prince as a husband. Ella wishes she could go to the ball to see Prince Char one last time. Suddenly, Lucinda appears looking disheveled and tired. She tried her spells on herself and has finally realized that those gifts were curses. Lucinda is prepared to lift Ella's enchantment, but discovers that her magic is weakened and cannot fulfill her promise. Although she lacks magic, Lucinda gives Ella her dress, shoes, tiara and sash to use as a mask. At the ball, the Prince is quickly drawn to Ella, even though she is in disguise. She calls herself Lela and the two dance while reciting their favorite Ayorthian poem. Prince Char begins to suspect Lela's true identity just as Hattie rushes over in a jealous rage to pull off her mask. Exposed, Ella quickly runs away, leaving behind a shoe.

The Prince and his Squire arrive at the house looking for Ella. Hattie and Olive try to trick the prince by each trying on the forgotten glass slipper, but Char dismisses them, saying he knows exactly who he is looking for. When the Prince orders Ella to marry him, she must call upon all her strength to resist the command—or Char and the land of Kyrria will be in terrible danger. But is Ella's love strong enough to break her curse? What will it take to finally let her speak her mind?



## GOING BY THE BOOK: AN EXCERPT FROM *ELLA ENCHANTED*

by Gail Carson Levine

*In this excerpt from Chapter One, Ella has just learned how serious her “gift” of obedience really is. She, along with her mother and their cook, Mandy, learn how to navigate the conditions of the curse.*

**A**nyone could control me with an order. It had to be a direct command, such as “Put on a shawl,” or “You must go to bed now.” A wish or a request had no effect. I was free to ignore “I wish you would put on a shawl,” or “Why don’t you go to bed now?” But against an order I was powerless.

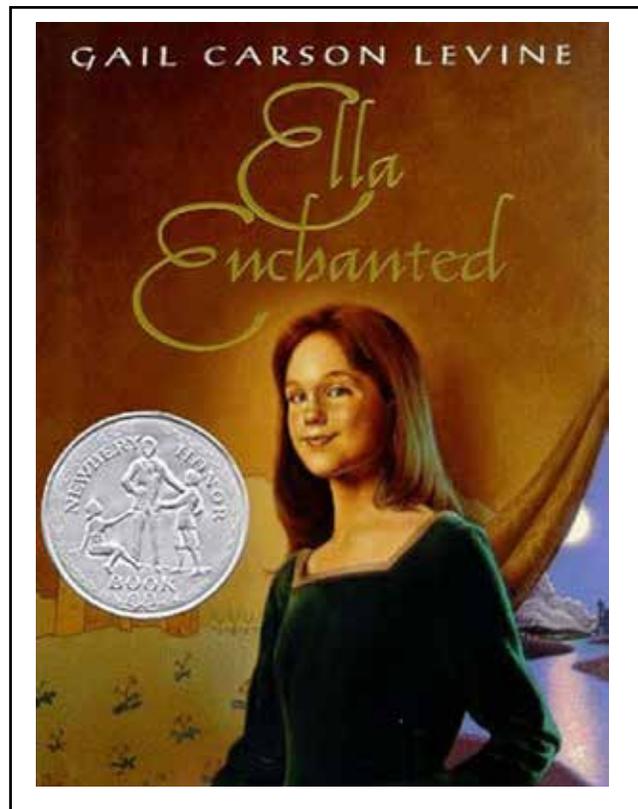
If someone told me to hop on one foot for a day and a half, I’d have to do it. And hopping on one foot wasn’t the worst order I could be given. If you commanded me to cut off my own head, I’d have to do it.

I was in danger at every moment.

As I grew older, I learned to delay my obedience, but each moment cost me dear—in breathlessness, nausea, dizziness, and other complaints. I could never hold out for long. Even a few minutes were a desperate struggle.

I had a fairy godmother, and Mother asked her to take the curse away. But my fairy godmother said Lucinda was the only one who could remove it. However, she also said it might be broken someday without Lucinda’s help.

But I didn’t know how. I didn’t even know who my fairy godmother was.

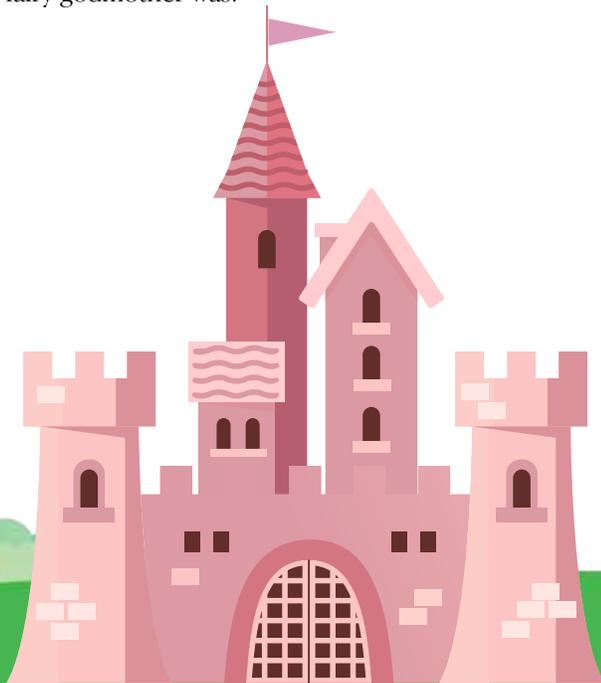


Instead of making me docile, Lucinda’s curse made a rebel of me. Or perhaps I was that way naturally.

Mother rarely insisted I do anything. Father knew nothing of the curse and saw me too infrequently to issue many commands. But Mandy was bossy, giving orders almost as often as she drew breath. Kind orders or for-your-own-good orders. “Bundle up, Ella.” Or “Hold this bowl while I beat the eggs, sweet.”

I disliked these commands, harmless as they were. I’d hold the bowl, but move my feet so she would have to follow me around the kitchen. She’d call me minx and try to hem me in with more specific instructions, which I would find new ways to evade. Often, it was a long business to get anything done between us, with Mother laughing and egging each of us on by turn.

We’d end happily—with me finally choosing to do what Mandy wanted, or with Mandy changing her order to a request.



## MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT: KAREN ZACARIÁS

**K**aren Zacarías is an award-winning playwright whose plays have been commissioned by and produced at prominent theatre companies around the country. Some highlights include the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Arena Stage, Goodman Theatre and many more.



Karen Zacarías

Her original musical, *Jane of the Jungle*, co-written with Deborah Wicks La Puma, had its world premiere at South Coast Repertory in 2012; and her spectacular *Destiny of Desire* played on SCR's Segerstrom Stage last season. She has written more than 20 shows, including plays, musicals and two ballets. She is the founder of Young Playwrights' Theater, an award-winning theater company that teaches playwriting in local public schools in Washington, DC. The company won the White House's National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award in 2010. Zacarías is known as one of the most produced Latina playwrights in the nation. She has used her passion for theatre to create a community of Latina/o theatre artists called the Latinx Theatre Commons, a platform that promotes the latest developments in the field of Latina/o theatre culture. Zacarías is fluent in English and Spanish and highly proficient in Danish and French. She has a BA with distinction from Stanford University and a Masters in Creative Writing from Boston University. Born in Mexico, Zacarías now lives in Washington D.C. with her husband and three children. When asked about her advice when dealing with writer's block she said, "even when your desire isn't there, you have to push forward and find the love for it again."

## MEET THE COMPOSER: DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA

**D**eborah Wicks La Puma is a composer, music director, orchestrator and choral conductor who is one of the most successful composers for Theatre for Young Audiences in the country. Her



Deborah Wicks La Puma

work for adults and children has been seen by thousands around the world, from the East Room of the White House to California, Hawaii, Australia and Singapore. Her awards include the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, a National Endowment for the Arts

New American Works Grant, two Parents' Choice Awards, an iParenting Media Award and two Helen Hayes nominations for Outstanding New Play. Wicks La Puma, a Mexican-American, received her MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, her BA from Stanford University and studied folk music with Alfredo Lopez, musicologist at La Universidad de Baja California. Wicks La Puma's entry into the musical theatre world began with the comedic, gospel musical *One Bad Apple*, which she wrote for her musical theatre thesis. Since then, she has composed for 21 productions and is a frequent collaborator with *Ella Enchanted* playwright Karen Zacarías. The two have worked on many productions together, including *Cinderella Eats Rice and Beans*, *Chasing George Washington* and *Jane of the Jungle*, co-written with Karen Zacarías, which had its world premiere at South Coast Repertory in 2012. She has also served as musical director on many Theatre for Young Audiences shows at SCR. Wicks La Puma currently resides in California with her husband Chris, three daughters and Mimi the cat.



## AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT AND COMPOSER

Excerpted from an interview printed in the *Washington Post* in February 2017, before *Ella Enchanted*'s world premiere at Adventure Theatre.

**Q: Was "Cinderella" an important story to you growing up? Are its themes still a big part of the culture?**

**Karen Zacarías:** I grew up in Mexico, where the Cinderella myth is alive and well in both good ways and bad: that every young girl is a potential princess, and that salvation is just a prince away. Disney has made millions banking on this fantasy, and our global fascination with Princess Diana and Princess Kate springs from our fascination with the Cinderella narrative. "Cinderella" is both a story of hope, redemption and justice while also being a story of passivity, obedience and physical attraction. Gail Carson Levine's book sets Cinderella on her head by giving her grit and vision.

**Deborah Wicks La Puma:** Growing up, I was never a big fan of Cinderella, as she always seemed so passive. She seemed to be a victim of outside forces who merely got lucky. And as a girl, I wanted to believe I had some control over my own fate and could "save myself." My father, who was raised by a single mother, encouraged me to be strong and independent so that I would always have choices in what direction my life would go. Perhaps that is why I had the courage to become a musician and composer. I love Levine's take on the story—in her version, Cinderella has a reason for her obedience and has the will to overcome it herself in the end.

**Q: What were the most important themes you wanted to be sure were represented on stage?**

**Zacarías:** Ella, like most girls in the world, is cursed with obedience, but that doesn't mean she doesn't have choices. Although she lives in an oppressive environment, she never gives up or gives in. She resists, and insists on finding a way to have her will be heard. Ella's relationship with the prince is based on mutual respect and interests; they become best friends as they fall in love. They both come across as real people who like each other for who they really are. I think modeling a real and healthy relationship is very important to both boys and girls.

**Wicks La Puma:** Karen and I immediately latched onto Ella's love of language, which is a wonderful detail Levine brought to the story. Karen and I both come from households that speak multiple languages (French, Danish, Spanish, Portuguese), so we share Ella's love of being able to speak our minds in multiple ways!

**Q: Did it make a difference creating a musical of female empowerment with an entirely female creative team?**

**Zacarías:** Not only are we friends, we are also mothers to daughters. So the process of building this story came from a place of deep understanding and complete clarity as to what was at stake for our young Ella. We knew in our bones that the idea of not having full consent or full ownership of your body and actions is a curse—and yet we never wanted her to be a victim—and ensured Ella used her wit and humor and bravery to save herself. Because that is what Ella does: She saves herself.

**Wicks La Puma:** Absolutely, it has been a pure joy to create this show. Karen and Mary Hall (the director) are such dear friends that we have an enormous amount of trust and respect for each other, thus making our collaboration easier and more fruitful. We were able to take the rewrites and production to a level of depth that would not have been possible without our feeling of sisterhood.

**Q: It's important that kids hear the story of *Ella Enchanted* in part because of "this time in history." Do you agree?**

**Zacarías:** *Ella Enchanted* is a fun and frolicking musical, but it also carries a powerful message about each child's responsibility to discover his or her own unique voice and use it to make the world a better and more inclusive place. It's a play that encourages children to resist bullies, to resist oppression, and to find the true magic of common language and common ground.

**Wicks La Puma:** I believe this is a timeless story that speaks to anyone who feels oppressed or who is looking for the courage to change their lives. We are at a pivoting moment in our country, where we could swing back or forward in how we treat each other based on our race, our gender or our nationality. Do we have the wisdom to listen to others who might not speak our language? Are we willing to walk in someone else's shoes and see how our actions affect their lives? Do we have the courage to stand up and say no?





## MEET THE AUTHOR: GAIL CARSON LEVINE

**G**ail Carson Levine grew up in New York City and credits her parents, David and Sylvia, for her creativity. It was in her third grade class that she began to find her love for writing stories and poems. Although a few of her poems were published in an anthology of student writing, Levine never imagined that she would become a writer one day. She attended the City College of New York and majored in philosophy. It was there that she met and married her husband, David. She went on to work for New York state government for 27 years. During that time, she did her first bit of writing for children. She and her husband, David, worked on a musical called *Spacennapped* together. She wrote the script while David wrote the music and lyrics. The show went on to be performed at a local theatre. One day, while meditating, she found herself wondering why she had never written stories. Her first book, *The King's Cure*, was an art appreciation book. Unfortunately, no one wanted to publish it, but the experience got Levine hooked on writing. Hoping to improve, she went to writing classes and joined critique groups. At last, her first novel, *Ella Enchanted*, which initially got rejected nine times, got published in 1997. *Ella Enchanted* went on to win the 1998 Newbery Honor award and was adapted into a 2004 movie of the same name starring Anne Hathaway. Levine's novels have been named annual Best Books by *School Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, *The Los Angeles Times* and the American Library Association. Her passion for writing has extended into teaching writing to children and young adults. Every summer she teaches a free fiction-and-poetry writing workshop for kids ten and up in cooperation with her local public library. She's also expanded the reach of her teaching with her blog and by visiting schools across the country and around the world; she has spoken to school children in Canada, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Taiwan, Bangkok, Germany and Italy.

# HOW *ELLA ENCHANTED* CAME ABOUT

Originally published in Scholastic's *Ella Enchanted* reading guide

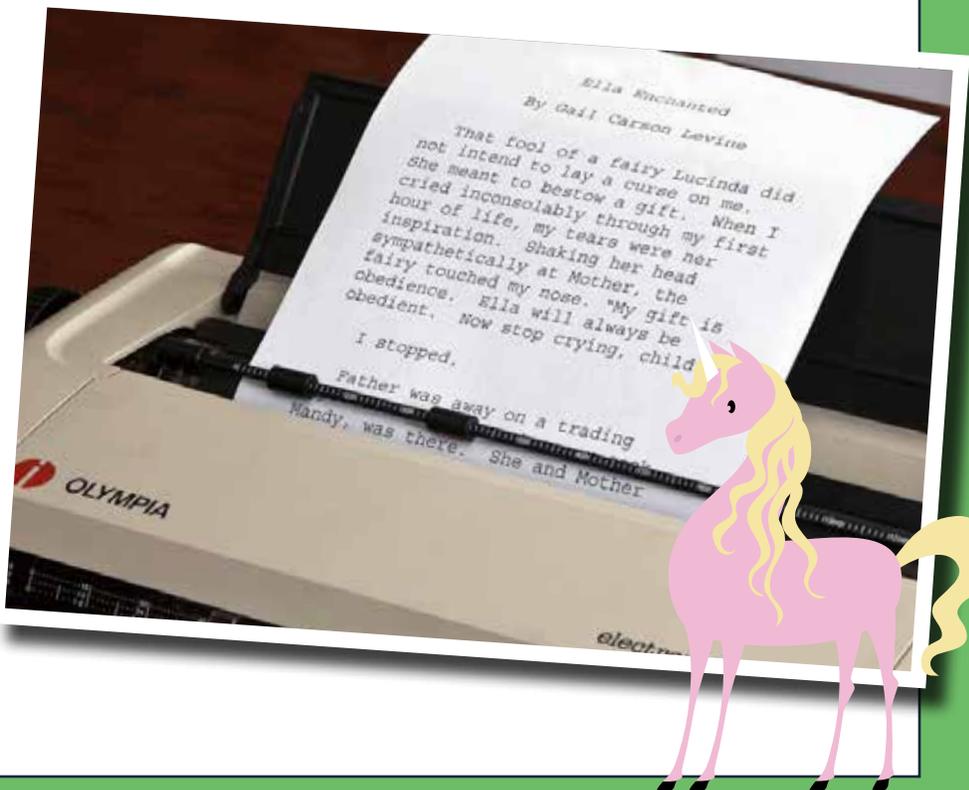
**W**hy didn't Cinderella ever stand up for herself? She did as she was told, slaved for her wicked stepmother and stepsisters without rebelling. She never ran away or picked a fight. She just sat around wishing. These are the kinds of things Gail Carson Levine was thinking about when she started the writing project that would become *Ella Enchanted*.

Levine was taking a children's book writing course at The New School in New York and wasn't sure what to write about. She decided to do a Cinderella story because it already had a plot. It also gave her a chance to tackle some of her questions about the story, such as why Cinderella never stood up for herself and told her stepmother, "No." Levine notes that in the fairy tale there is only one task Cinderella has to accomplish on her own behalf—getting home before midnight—"and she blows it." Levine knew she couldn't write about a standard Cinderella. For two weeks, she struggled with the problem. As she says in *Contemporary Authors*: "That's when I came up with the curse: She's only good because she has to be, and she is in constant rebellion." Then Levine was "liberated to write the story."

*Ella Enchanted* took two years to write. Gail Levine was working full-time, and she spent almost four hours a day commuting to and from her job in Manhattan. Much of the book was written on commuter trains.

Writing *Ella Enchanted* gave Levine a chance to explore the "missing details" in fairy tales that hadn't bothered her as a kid, but perplexed her as an adult. For instance, she had always wondered why the elves abandon the shoemaker in "The Shoemaker and the Elves." "I came up with one answer, but many are possible," she has said.

While writing and exploring, she got "sidetracked," as writers often do. She ended up throwing out hundreds of pages and "going back to about page twenty, where I had left the real story," she told *Authors & Artists for Young Adults*. Once Levine had found her story and completed it, she sent off the manuscript to an agent who could bring it to the attention of editors at different publishing houses. Her life would never be the same!



# Part II: Classroom Activities

## BEFORE THE SHOW

### Questions for Discussion and Activities

1. Have your students read Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted* independently or aloud in class.
  - a. Ask the students to identify the story's themes and underlying messages.
  - b. Ask the students to identify each character's journey. What do they want to achieve, and what's standing in their way?
  - c. Ask the students to analyze the characters' personalities and how that affects the way in which they perceive the world around them.
  - d. Ask the students to think about the novel's tone. Which moments are funny? Which moments feel more serious? How does this variety make the experience richer?
2. Have your students read a classic version of Cinderella's story. (A simple text of the Disney version can be found at <http://www.childrenstory.com/tales/1page/cinderella.html>.) Using a Venn diagram, ask you students to compare and contrast the stories of Ella and Cinderella.
3. Talk about fairy tales.
  - a. What are they and why do we tell them?
  - b. What are the main elements of a fairy tale? Have your students make a list.  
**ACTIVITY:** Have you students utilize those elements to create their own modern-day version of Cinderella or adapt another classic fairy tale.
4. In the story, Ella is told not to reveal her "gift of obedience" to anyone.
  - a. Have you ever had to keep a big secret?
  - b. Why was it important to keep the secret?
  - c. How did keeping the secret affect you?
5. Frell is a magical place full of magical beings like fairies, giants and ogres, as well as spells and curses. Have your students brainstorm how the theatre might bring those magical elements to life on stage.
6. Discuss all the different jobs involved to bring a production like *Ella Enchanted* to life. Have students research the occupations on this list and share what they find with the class.
  - a. Actor
  - b. Director
  - c. Playwright
  - d. Choreographer
  - e. Designer
  - f. Stage manager
  - g. Stage crew

7. Ella spends her free time in the menagerie, where she learns languages from The Bird. Her knowledge of these languages helps her along her journey to find Lucinda.
  - a. Ask your students how many of them can speak a different language. Have them demonstrate a simple phrase or word in that language.
  - b. Ask them, if they could choose a new language to learn, which it would be and why.
  - c. Have students research other languages to find out the top 3 most spoken languages in the world and in the country.
  - d. Discuss why knowing other languages might be important.

### 8. FREE WRITING ACTIVITY

Imagine you have been given the gift of obedience. If anyone commands you to do something, you have to do it—no matter what. Write a journal entry of what your day is like. Consider these questions:

- a. What is your life like under this curse?
- b. Do you live in fear of any particular command?
- c. Are your days dangerous or merely inconvenient?
- d. How does your curse affect your relationship with others?
- e. How does it affect your plans for the future?

### 9. A FRIENDLY LETTER

*Originally printed in First Stage's Ella Enchanted Enrichment Guide*

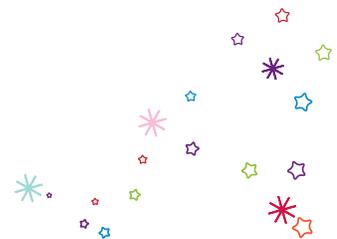
Even though they were far apart, Ella and Char's friendship continued to get stronger through their letter writing. Oftentimes when writing letters, we can be more open with our feelings and say things that are challenging to say out loud.

Have students write a friendly letter to a friend or family member who lives far away. Use the friendly letter format:

Date, Greeting, Body, Closing and Name.

Friendly Letter closings include:

Your Friend,  
Warmly,  
With Love,  
Love,  
In Kindness



# FUN WITH LANGUAGES

Ella is passionate about learning different languages.

Language	Who Speaks it?	What Does it Sound Like?
Ayorthian	The kingdom of Ayortha	Poetic
Kyrrian	People who live in Frell	It sounds exactly like English
Elfian	Elves	
Abdegi	Giants	Heavy use of noises (howl, screech, honk, whistle)
Ogrese	Ogres	Smooth, liquid voices, evil sounding
Gnomic	Gnomes	
	Fairies	

## 1. USING THE CHART ABOVE:

- Fill in the qualities of the different languages.  
Do they speak:
  - Loudly or softly?
  - Quickly or slowly?
  - High pitched or low pitched?
  - Do they hold out certain letters or sounds?
- In the book, there is no language for the fairies. Using the last box in the chart, give the language a name and fill in what it sounds like.



2. HERE ARE SOME PHRASES FROM THE BOOK. TRY SAYING THEM ALOUD WITH THE QUALITIES YOU HAVE CHOSEN.

Phrase	Translation
Otemso iffibensi asura ippiri	Sometimes they are much worse
Adumma ubensu enusse onsordo	Please write soon
Ecete iffibensi asura edanse evtame oyjento?	Is this how they behave at finishing school?

Phrase	Translation
Porr ol pess waddo	Walk in the shade
Aff ench poel?	Who are you/ what is your name?
Vib ol pess waddo	Stay in the shade

ABDEGI

Phrase	Translation
Aiiiee ooo (howl) bek aaau.	I miss you already
Aaaope! Aiiiee uuu koobee (screech) oob payiipe aaau.	Hello
Oooayaagik (honk)!	Welcome



OGRESE

Phrase	Translation
ahthOOon SSyng	Farewell
forns uiv eMMong FFnOO ehf nushOOon	It will taste sour for hours
szah, suSS fyng mOOng psySSahbuSS	Yes, and they were delicious

GNOMIC

Phrase	Translation
fwthchor evtoogh brzzay eerth ymmad boech evtoogh brzzaY	Digging is good for the wealth and good for the health
pwich azzoogh fraechH	Where is my mother?
!jdgumkwu azzoogH	Kiss me

3. EXAMINE THE PATTERNS OF THE DIFFERENT LANGUAGES (HOW THEY ARE SPELLED, WHAT LETTERS THEY USE, ETC.)

- Grab a partner and create a short six-sentence conversation in the language of your choice.
- Present your conversation to the class.

**INTERVIEW WITH GAIL CARSON LEVINE ABOUT CREATING THE LANGUAGES**

Originally published in Scholastic's *Ella Enchanted* reading guide.

**Q:** Ella's world is full of people and creatures who speak a variety of languages that you've created for them. How did you go about inventing these languages—were they inspired by their speakers? For instance, is there a reason why the biggest creatures, the giants, use so many words to say a simple "hello" in Abdegi?

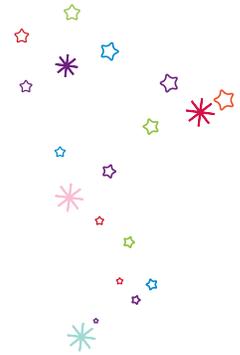
**Levine:** Yes, aspects of some of the languages were inspired by the speakers. The giants are such jovial and emotional creatures that their "hellos" would naturally be lengthy. They'd want to make sure that the depth and sincerity of their welcomes are understood. They have lots of emotive sounds in their language, and their alphabet is only vowels and percussive [sharp, striking] consonants. Abdegi, the name of the language, is also the first six letters in its alphabet. Ogrese is sneaky and insinuating, just like the ogres. I wanted the languages to look different, so the 11 double letters in Ogrese are capitalized. Gnomic has a lot of guttural sounds, and it's punctuated and capitalized backwards, with the punctuation at the beginning of the sentence and the capital letter at the end of the word. Elfian is phonetically like English, only nonsense words. I was thinking of Italian when I invented Ayorthian, and so every word begins with a vowel and ends with the same vowel. I kept a glossary of the words, but I didn't do much with grammar. If you look closely you'll find that plurals and tenses are haphazard.

# WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

**Ella speaks several languages and loves learning new words. Here are some words in English that you will hear during the show.**

MATCH EACH WORD WITH ITS DEFINITION, THEN FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE SENTENCES BELOW.

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| a. bannister:   | ___1) mythical creatures that are half human and half horse                  |
| b. linguist:    | ___2) a magical charm or spell   |
| c. remedy:      | ___3) someone who studies languages  |
| d. condolences: | ___4) a collection of wild animals on display                                |
| e. obedience:   | ___5) a treatment for a disease or injury                                    |
| f. enchantment: | ___6) the handrail at the side of a staircase                                |
| g. menagerie:   | ___7) a room that is used for washing dishes and doing laundry               |
| h. centaurs:    | ___8) to present something as a gift   |
| i. etiquette:   | ___9) an expression of sympathy for someone experiencing pain or sorrow      |
| j. bestow:      | ___10) to set someone free   |
| k. liberate:    | ___11) to receive something valuable from someone, especially after they die |
| l. scullery:    | ___12) following commands and doing what one is told to do                   |
| m. inherit:     | ___13) rules for the proper way to behave                                    |



NOW FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE WORDS LISTED ABOVE.

1. I want to become the Court \_\_\_\_\_, so that I can speak my mind in thirty-three languages.
2. The fairy Lucinda meant to \_\_\_\_\_ a gift, not a curse, on me.
3. Ella didn't \_\_\_\_\_ her mother's wealth, just her sense of adventure.
4. I'm here to teach you \_\_\_\_\_: everything from which fork to use to how to greet a prince.
5. Lucinda believes that \_\_\_\_\_ is a gift; but Ella realizes how dangerous it can be to have to follow orders.
6. Sir Peter, please let me offer my \_\_\_\_\_ on the death of your wife.
7. Ella was filthy and tired after working in her stepmother's \_\_\_\_\_ all day.
8. When I'm alone, I like to visit the royal \_\_\_\_\_ and see creatures from all around the kingdom.
9. I love to slide down the \_\_\_\_\_, but my father tells me that it's not proper.
10. I'm not feeling well, but I'm sure we can find a \_\_\_\_\_.
11. According to Greek mythology, herds of \_\_\_\_\_ roamed the mountains and forests, armed with bows and arrows.
12. Please \_\_\_\_\_ me from this curse, so that I can finally live a normal life!
13. Beware: this \_\_\_\_\_ is very powerful and may have unintended effects.

## AFTER THE SHOW

### Discussion About the Theatre

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance and ask the students about their experience attending live theatre.

1. What was the first thing you noticed about the theatre? What did the stage look like?
2. Discuss the technical elements of the production—the set, the costumes, the lighting and the sound. Ask the students what they liked best and why. How did these elements help to tell the story of Ella and her journey?
3. What was your favorite moment of the play? What was the funniest? What was the saddest?
4. Discuss the ways in which the play was surprising. Was the story told in the same way that you imagined it would be?
5. What did the songs in the play add to the storytelling?
6. How is attending a live performance different from attending a movie? How does your experience change when you know that the story is happening in the same room as you and that the actors can see and hear you?

### Discussion About the Play

Now guide the discussion through the content of *Ella Enchanted*.

1. When adapting a book for the stage, the plot must be condensed (which means some characters are left out)
  - a. Compare the characters in the book to the characters in the musical.
  - b. Which characters were left out? Why do you think this is?
  - c. Did you see any of the missing characters' characteristics or scenarios represented in another way in the musical?
  - d. Do you feel the core story was changed by cutting these characters? Why or why not?
  - e. If you could choose any character who was in the book but not in the musical to be added, who would it be and why?
2. Ella's mother immediately acknowledges that obedience is a curse, but still tries to help Ella cope with her bad situation.
  - a. What are some of the tactics that Ella uses to cope with her curse?
  - b. Which coping strategies are most effective?
  - c. What does Ella learn from living under a curse? How might she be a different person if she didn't grow up with the "gift" of obedience?
  - d. Is there a time where you learned the best way to deal with a bad situation?
3. Early on in this novel, Ella receives the "gift" of obedience. As time goes on, we learn that this "gift" is actually a curse.
  - a. What other "gift" besides obedience might become a curse?
  - b. Lucinda's blessing to Sir Peter and Dame Olga is the "gift" of eternal, binding love. What are the drawbacks to such a "gift"?
4. Sir Peter, Dame Olga, Hattie and Olive are all cruel to Ella at times, but in very different ways.
  - a. Why do you think that each of these characters behaves the way they do?
  - b. Who does Ella have the most trouble dealing with?
  - c. Is one of them the "villain" of the play? Who would you pick, and why?
  - d. Do any of them display moments of kindness or sympathy?
5. Ella and Char start off as friends and slowly fall in love.
  - a. What do they admire about each other?
  - b. Many of their conversations take place through the letters they write each other. What do you think is in those letters—and how are their written conversations different from their spoken ones?
6. Ella decides to attend the ball, even though she has vowed to stay away from Char.
  - a. Why do you think Ella decides to go to the ball?
  - b. Was this a good decision on her part?
  - c. Can you think of a time when you knew you shouldn't do something—but did it anyway?
  - d. Why did you make that choice, and how did it turn out?



7. At the end of the musical, Ella could break the spell on her own without the help of magic.
  - a. What do you think made this moment different from the other times that she tried to resist commands?
  - b. Ella tried to persuade Lucinda to break the spell earlier in the play. Does it matter who breaks the spell? How would the play have been different if Lucinda had lifted the spell for Ella?
8. What do you think happens after Ella marries Char and becomes the Court Linguist? What changes will she try to make in the kingdom? How will she treat her family?
4. Lucinda grants Ella the curse of obedience. In the following game, see how closely you can follow along to Lucinda’s commands. This game is similar to Simon Says. (This game was originally printed in First Stage’s *Ella Enchanted* Enrichment Guide.)
 

One student is appointed to be the leader, Lucinda. The leader says, “Lucinda Says (an activity).” The followers are only to follow along to the commands where the leader prefaces the action with “Lucinda Says”. If they do the action without being told, they must sit down. The last one standing can be the next leader.

To stay with the theme of fairy tales, you can use commands such as: Wave your magic wand. Stir your potion. Stomp like a Giant. Growl like an ogre. Polish your crown. Brainstorm more commands with your class!

## ACTIVITIES

1. During the play, we hear some of Char’s letters to Ella, but we never hear her replies. Compose a letter that Ella could send to Char while she is working as a scullery maid for Dame Olga. Remember that she needs to hide her curse and the truth of her circumstances from him. How can she say something interesting and meaningful without lying—or revealing her secrets? What can she say about her family and daily life? Be creative!
2. Narrate the story from the perspective of Sir Peter, Dame Olga, Hattie or Olive. What are the challenges that this character faces and how do they overcome them? What does this character learn over the course of the play? Does their relationship with Ella change as a result? What happens to them after the play ends?
3. Imagine that you are a giant or an ogre in the kingdom of Frell. Describe your life. Where do you live and who lives there with you? What do you eat and wear? What are your interactions with the humans of Frell like? Do they ever judge you unfairly? What would a giant’s or ogre’s version of a Cinderella story be?

## LETTERS OF THANKS

**G**ive the students the opportunity to write letters of thanks to SCR describing the most memorable aspects of attending a performance of *Ella Enchanted*, and what they enjoyed most about their visit to SCR.

**South Coast Repertory**  
**Attn: TYA**  
**PO Box 2197**  
**Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197**



# Part III: At The Theatre

## WELCOME TO THE ARGYROS

**T**he 336-seat Julianne Argyros Stage opened in 2002 and we are delighted that thousands of Orange County school children fill this state-of-the-art facility each season to enjoy our Theatre for Young Audiences productions. The Argyros is a proscenium theatre designed to provide audiences a feeling of intimacy; no seat more than 39 feet from the stage.

## THEATRE ETIQUETTE

**T**heatre is an art form that depends on both the artists and the audience. A performance is influenced by an audience, just as an audience is influenced by a performance. The artists and staff of South Coast Repertory are creating a special new world for you to visit. When you walk into the theatre, you will have a sense that behind the curtain is the secret of that new world that is about to come to life before your eyes. Sometimes it's so exciting that you can barely hold still. But remember: once the play begins, you have a very important job to do. Everybody in the theatre is a part of the play. You are connected to all the other people in the audience, as well as to the actors on the stage because you're all in the same room. The actors can SEE you, HEAR you and FEEL you, just as you can SEE, HEAR and FEEL them. Your attention, involvement, responses and imagination are a real part of each and every performance. The play can actually be made better because of you!

## STUDENT TIPS FOR THEATRE TRIPS

- Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.
- Listen carefully to the SCR staff member who will board your bus with last-minute tips.
- Take your seat in the theatre before going to the bathroom or getting a drink of water.
- Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.
- Do not stand up, walk around or put your feet on the seat in front of you.



Julianne Argyros Stage.

- Absolutely no chewing gum, eating or drinking in the building.
- No backpacks, cameras or electronic devices are permitted in the theatre.
- Feel free to talk quietly in your seats before the show.
- Show your appreciation by clapping for the actors at the end of the play.
- After the lights come back up, wait for the ushers to escort your group out of the theatre.

## PROGRAMS

**E**veryone who attends a Theatre for Young Audiences performance at SCR receives a program, also called a playbill. Patrons at weekend public performances receive their programs from the ushers upon entering the theatre. At the conclusion of each weekday matinee, teachers will be given programs for their students which can be distributed back in the classroom. In addition to the customary information about the play and the players, the program contains features and activities that students will have fun working on after the show, either in class or at home on their own.

# Part IV: Education Station

Here are some of the California state standards that apply to attending this performance of *Ella Enchanted* and doing the activities in this study guide.

## FROM VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS:

### Theatre Content Standards for Grade Four

For other grades, see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/asp>

#### 1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

Processing, Analyzing and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre

Students observe their environment and respond, using the elements of theatre. They also observe formal and informal works of theatre, film/video and electronic media and respond, using the vocabulary of theatre.

##### Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

- 1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as plot, conflict, climax, resolution, tone, objectives, motivation and stock characters, to describe theatrical experiences.

##### Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre

- 1.2 Identify a character's objectives and motivations to explain that character's behavior.
- 1.3 Demonstrate how voice (diction, pace and volume) may be used to explore multiple possibilities for a live reading. Examples: I want you to go. I want you to go. I want you to go.

#### 2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Creating, Performing and Participating in Theatre

Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos and electronic media productions and to perform in them.

##### Development of Theatrical Skills

- 2.1 Demonstrate the emotional traits of a character through gesture and action.



Louis Pardo and Alex Miller in the 2015 Theatre for Young Audiences production of *A Year with Frog and Toad*

##### Creation/Invention in Theatre

- 2.2 Retell or improvise stories from classroom literature in a variety of tones (gossipy, sorrowful, comic, frightened, joyful, sarcastic).
- 2.3 Design or create costumes, props, makeup or masks to communicate a character in formal or informal performances.

#### 3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre

Students analyze the role and development of theatre, film/video and electronic media in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting diversity as it relates to theatre.



The cast of SCR's 2015 Theatre for Young Audiences production of *The Light Princess*.

### Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

- 3.1 Identify theatrical or storytelling traditions in the cultures of ethnic groups throughout the history of California.

### History of Theatre

- 3.2 Recognize key developments in the entertainment industry in California, such as the introduction of silent movies, animation, radio and television broadcasting and interactive video.

## 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences

Students critique and derive meaning from works of theatre, film/video, electronic media and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.

### Critical Assessment of Theatre

- 4.1 Develop and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics for critiquing performances as to characterization, diction, pacing, gesture and movement.
- 4.2 Compare and contrast the impact on the audience of theatre, film, television, radio and other media.

### Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

- 4.3 Describe students responses to a work of theatre and explain what the scriptwriter did to elicit those responses.

## 5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Theatre, Film/Video and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to theatre.

### Connections and Applications

- 5.1 Dramatize events in California history.
- 5.2 Use improvisation and dramatization to explore concepts in other content areas.

### Careers and Career-Related Skills

- 5.3 Exhibit team identity and commitment to purpose when participating in theatrical experiences.

## BASIC THEATRE VOCABULARY

**Acting** The process by which an individual interprets and performs the role of an imagined character.

**Action** The core of a theatre piece; the sense of forward movement created by the sequence of events and the physical and psychological motivations of characters.

**Ad-Lib** To improvise stage business or dialogue; to make it up as you go along.

**Apron** The area of the stage that extends toward the audience, in front of the main curtain.

**Audience** The people who come to see a performance.

**Backstage** The space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience.

**Balcony** An upper floor of seats projecting out over the main seating area of a theatre.

**Blocking** The movement and stage business, designed by the director and performed by the actors.

**Boxes** Seats separated from the main seating area located on the upper level near the stage.

**Box Office** A windowed space at the front of the theatre building where tickets are sold.

**Business** Any action performed on stage.

**Character** The role played by an actor as she or he assumes another's identity.

**Choreography** The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.

**Conflict** The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play.

**Costume** The carefully selected or specially designed clothing worn by the actors.

**Cross** The actor's movement from one stage location to another.

**Cue** The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.

**Dialogue** The stage conversation between characters.

**Diction** The clarity with which words are pronounced.

**Director** The person who oversees the entire process of staging a theatrical production.

**Downstage** The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower ("down") part closest to the audience, and the higher ("up") part further away.

**Ensemble** A cast of actors working together effectively to present a theatrical performance.

**Flats** Canvas or wood-covered frames that are used for the walls of a stage setting.

**Green Room** A room near the stage where actors await entrance cues and receive guests. The room's name comes from Elizabethan times, when actors waited on a real "green" (or patch of grass).

**Improvisation** The spontaneous use of movement and speech, made up by an actor to create a character.

**Lobby** The public waiting area outside the theatre space.

**Matinee** An afternoon performance of a play.

**Mezzanine** Lower level seating area beneath the balcony overhang.

**Monologue** A solo speech during which the character reveals personal thoughts.

**Narrator** A character who tells the story of the play directly to the audience.

**Orchestra** Lower-level seating area immediately in front of the stage.

**"Places"** Direction given by the Stage Manager for actors to be in position before each act begins

**Plot** The "what happens" in a story: beginning (the setting, characters, and problem); middle (how the characters work to solve the problem); and the ending (resolution of the problem).

**Project** To speak loudly so the entire audience can hear you.

**Props** All the stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.

**Proscenium Stage** A traditional theatre with the audience seated in front of a proscenium arch framing the stage. SCR's Argyros Stage is a proscenium stage.

**Rehearsal** Time performers use to practice privately before a performance in front of an audience.

**Run** Length of time the play will be presented (i.e. two weeks, two months, two years).

**Script** The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.

**Set** All of the scenery that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play.

**Stagecraft** The knowledge and skills required to create the physical aspects of a production; i.e. scenery, lighting, costumes, props and recorded sound and music.

**Stage Left** That part of the stage to the actor's left when the actor faces the audience.

**Stage Manager** The person who supervises the physical production of a play and who is in charge of the stage during the performance.

**Stage Right** That part of the stage to the actor's right when the actor faces the audience.

**Strike** Dismantling the set, costumes and props at the end of the run of a show.

**Theme** The central thought, idea or significance of the action of a play.

**Upstage** The area of the stage farthest way from the audience and nearest to the back wall.



# PART V: Resources

## MORE INFORMATION ON *ELLA ENCHANTED*

- Official Website of Gail Carson Levine: <http://www.gailcarsonlevine.com/>
- Official Website of Karen Zacarías: <http://www.karenzacarias.com/bio/>
- Official Website of Deborah Wicks la Puma: <http://crunchynotes.com/>
- First Stage’s Enrichment Guide: <http://www.firststage.org/Documents/First%20Stage%20PDFs/Enrichment%20Guides/Ella-EG-2016.pdf>
- Languages of *Ella Enchanted*: <http://www.kreativekorp.com/miscpages/ella/>
- Scholastic Reading Guide for *Ella Enchanted*: <https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/activities/migrated-files-in-body/ella-enchanted-bookfile.pdf>

Answer key for definitions: 1) h; 2) f; 3) b; 4) g; 5) c; 6) a; 7) l; 8) j; 9) d; 10) k; 11) m; 12) e; 13) i  
Answer key for fill-in-the-blank: 1) b; 2) j; 3) m; 4) i; 5) c; 6) d; 7) l; 8) g; 9) a; 10) c; 11) h; 12) k; 13) f